midnight nation
created by j. michael straczynski

"BEYOND THE ROAD"

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jonathan sibal
matt milla

Previously:
Having made the ultimate sacrifice by giving his soul to Laurel, David finds himself back in the regular world, alone.

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J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI'S
MIDNIGHT NATION
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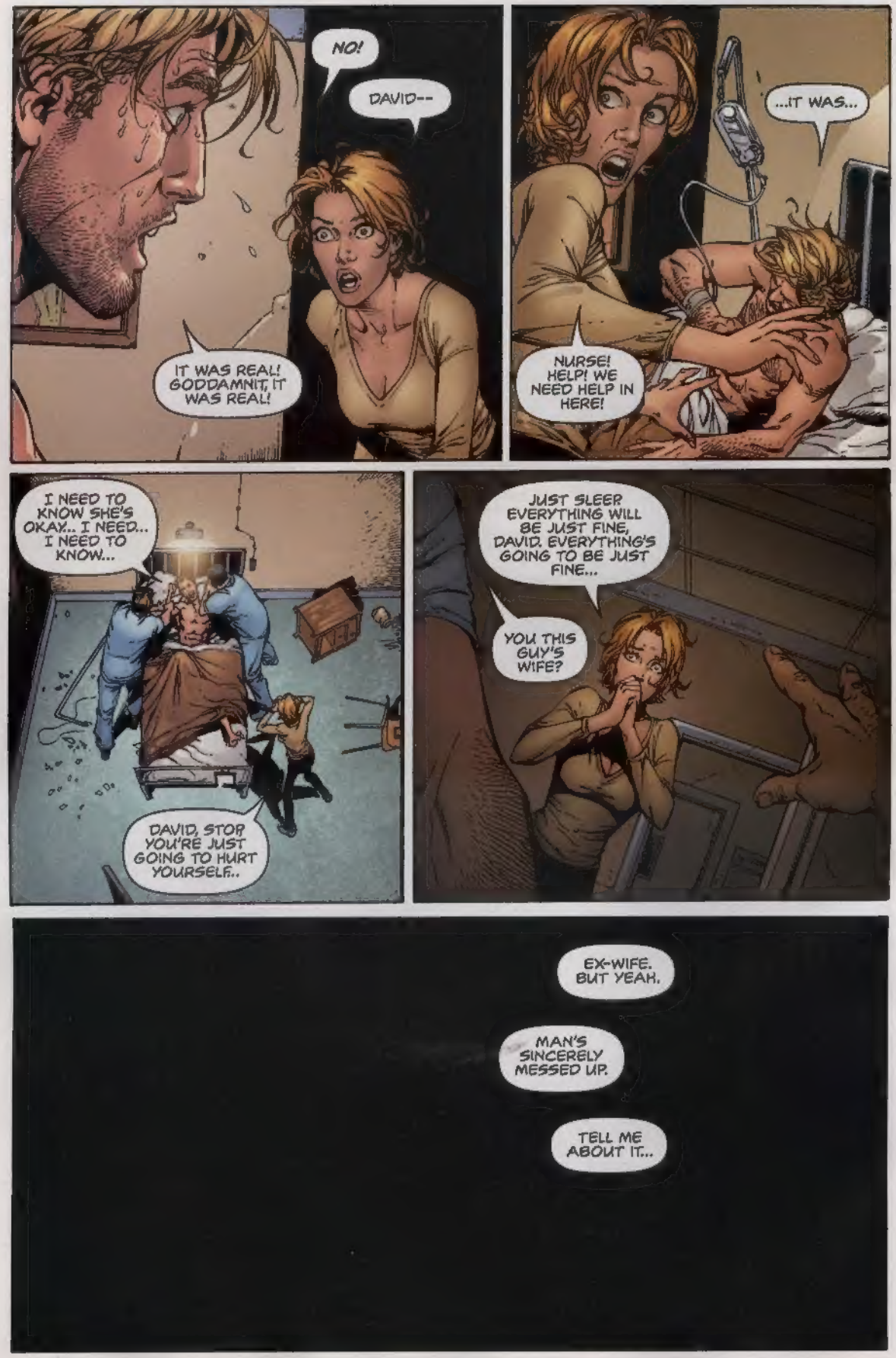
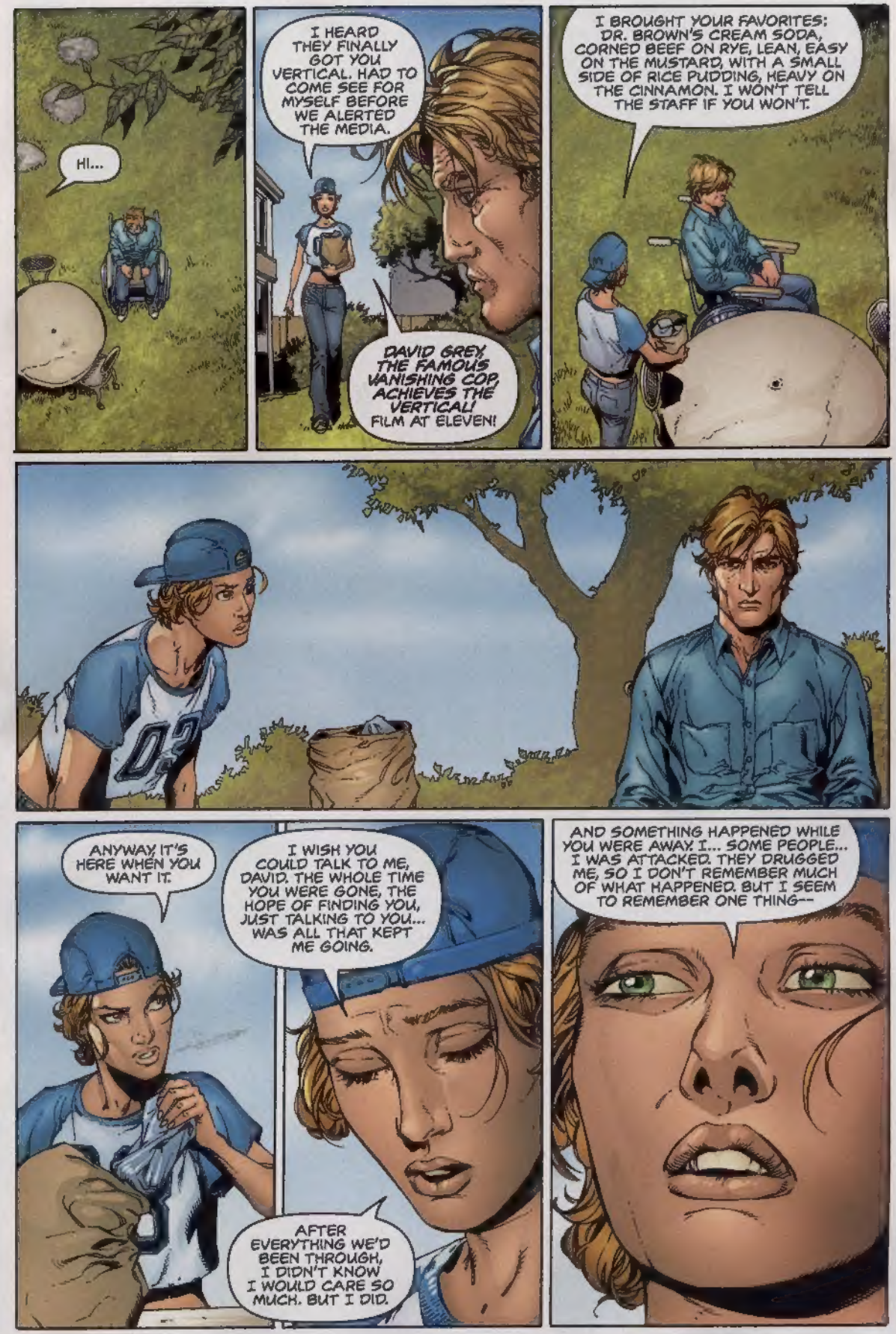
OBI

110
WHERE... WHERE AM...
YOU'RE OKAY, BUDDY, YOU'RE GOING TO BE OKAY. LOOKS LIKE EXHAUSTION AND DEHYDRATION BUT NOTHING SERIOUS.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME? CAN YOU TELL ME YOUR NAME?
DAVID... DAVID... GREY.
LAPD... DETECTIVE...
HEY, MAX... THAT COP THAT WENT MISSING IN L.A. ABOUT A YEAR AGO... WAS HIS NAME DAVID GREY?
YEAH, I THINK SO... WHY?
AMBULANCE
I THINK WE FOUND HIM.

AN HOSPI
DAVID? DAVID, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
..YEAH... WHO..?
HI.
LAU... LAUREL?
NO, DAVID, IT'S ME--
--SARAH.
..SARAH...?
I CAME AS SOON AS THEY CALLED. YOU'VE BEEN UNCONSCIOUS FOR ALMOST TWO DAYS.

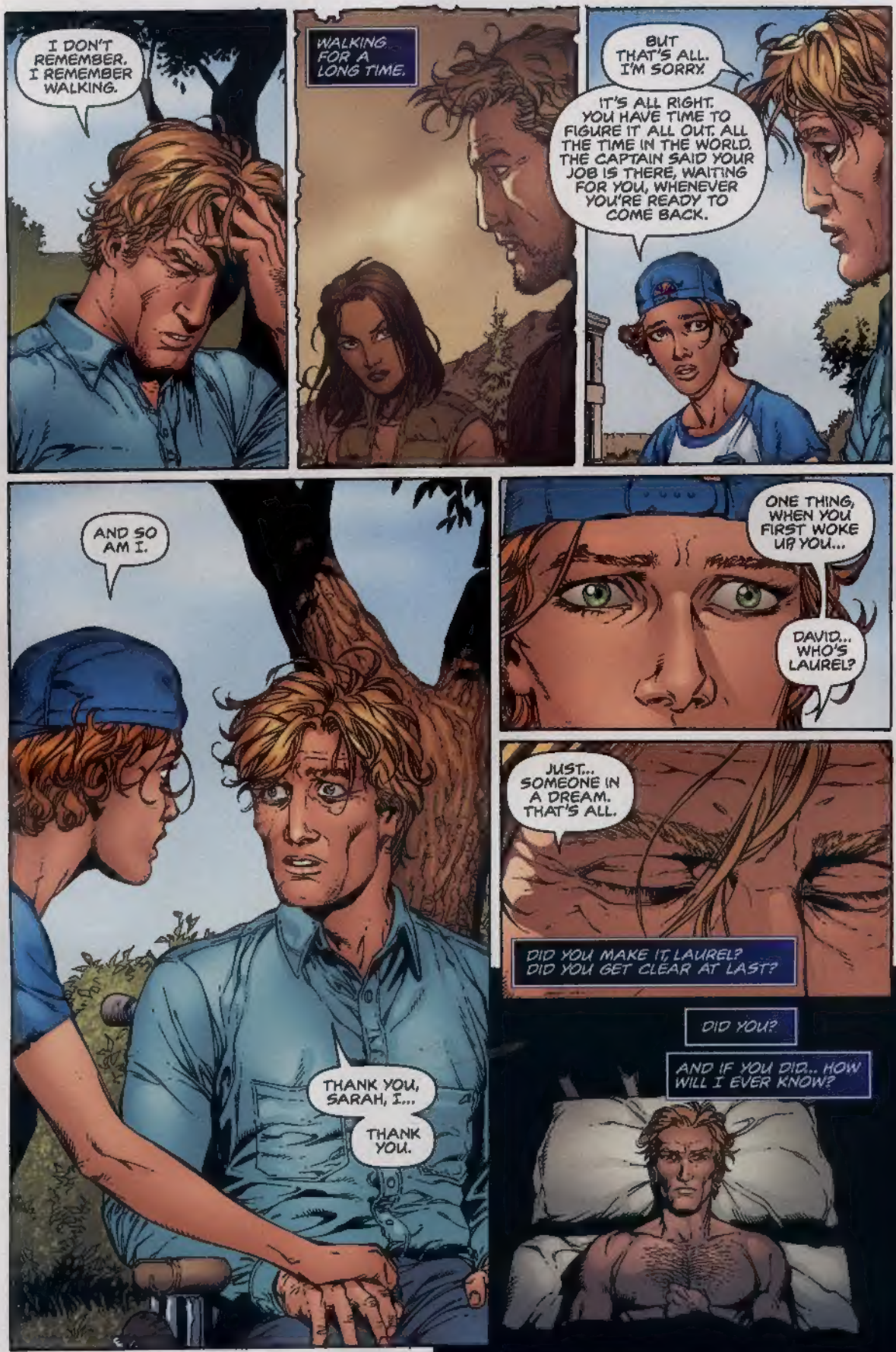
DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED?
YEAH... SORRY.. JUST BEEN HAVING THE GODDAMNDEST DREAMS... I WAS CHECKING OUT A HOMICIDE... WE WENT IN TOGETHER, THEN THESE GUYS CAME AT US--
NO, DAVID, THAT WAS...
..THAT WAS A YEAR AGO.
A YEAR...?
YES, YOU'RE IN NEW YORK. I--

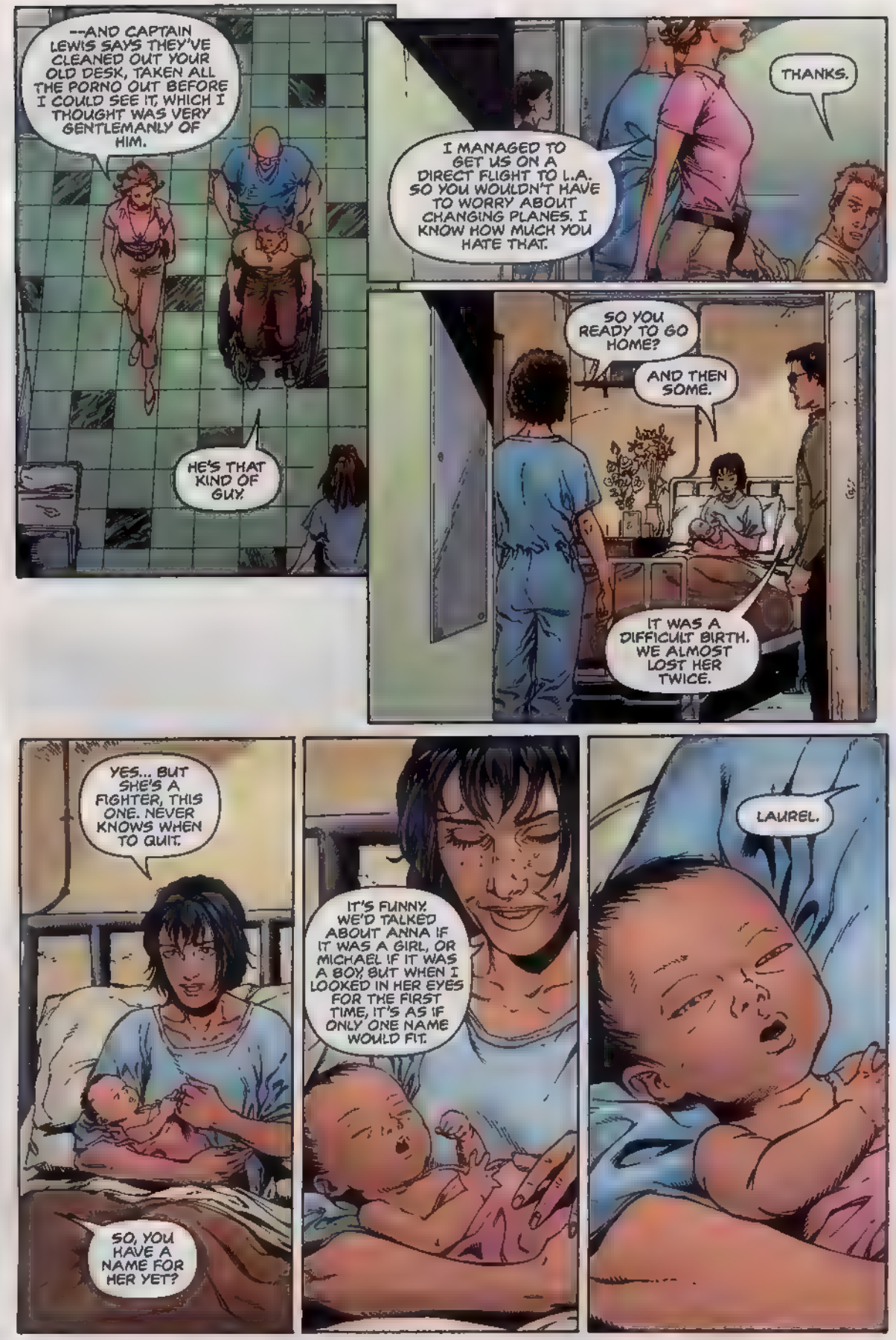

NO!
DAVID--
IT WAS REAL! GODDAMNIT, IT WAS REAL!
...IT WAS...
NURSE! HELP! WE NEED HELP IN HERE!
I NEED TO KNOW SHE'S OKAY... I NEED... I NEED TO KNOW...
DAVID, STOP YOU'RE JUST GOING TO HURT YOURSELF...
JUST SLEEP EVERYTHING WILL BE JUST FINE, DAVID. EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE JUST FINE...
YOU THIS GUY'S WIFE?
EX-WIFE. BUT YEAH.
MAN'S SINCERELY MESSED UP.
TELL ME ABOUT IT...


HI...
I HEARD THEY FINALLY GOT YOU VERTICAL. HAD TO COME SEE FOR MYSELF BEFORE WE ALERTED THE MEDIA.
DAVID GREY, THE FAMOUS VANISHING COP, ACHIEVES THE VERTICAL! FILM AT ELEVEN!
I BROUGHT YOUR FAVORITES: DR. BROWN'S CREAM SODA, CORNED BEEF ON RYE, LEAN, EASY ON THE MUSTARD, WITH A SMALL SIDE OF RICE PUDDING, HEAVY ON THE CINNAMON. I WON'T TELL THE STAFF IF YOU WON'T.
ANYWAY, IT'S HERE WHEN YOU WANT IT.
I WISH YOU COULD TALK TO ME, DAVID. THE WHOLE TIME YOU WERE GONE, THE HOPE OF FINDING YOU, JUST TALKING TO YOU... WAS ALL THAT KEPT ME GOING.
AFTER EVERYTHING WE'D BEEN THROUGH, I DIDN'T KNOW I WOULD CARE SO MUCH. BUT I DID.
AND SOMETHING HAPPENED WHILE YOU WERE AWAY. I... SOME PEOPLE... I WAS ATTACKED. THEY DRUGGED ME, SO I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH OF WHAT HAPPENED. BUT I SEEM TO REMEMBER ONE THING--

I'M HERE... I'M...HERE...
DA... VID...
I THOUGHT YOU WERE THERE... I KNOW YOU COULDN'T HAVE BEEN THERE, BUT IN MY DRUGGED STATE, I FELT YOUR PRESENCE.
AND YOU SAID THE WORDS THAT I SO NEEDED TO HEAR. THE WORDS THAT KEPT ME GOING THROUGH THE NIGHTMARE.
PLEASE, DON'T... DON'T DO IT... I LOVE YOU... I'M SORRY... I'M SORRY.
IT MADE ME REALIZE HOW MUCH I HAD COME TO DEPEND ON YOU, HOW MUCH A PART OF ME YOU HAD BECOME, THAT EVEN YOUR MEMORY WAS ENOUGH TO HELP PULL ME THROUGH.
I'VE GOT YOU... IT'S OKAY... I'VE GOT YOU...
...I...
I'VE GOT YOU...
IT WAS JUST THE THOUGHT OF YOU... BECAUSE THE SANE PART OF MY BRAIN KNOWS YOU COULDN'T HAVE BEEN ANYWHERE NEAR THERE.

AND IT MADE ME REALIZE THAT I HAD TO BE THERE FOR YOU, THAT WE HAD TO FIND YOU, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED, WHETHER YOU WERE ALIVE OR--
CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED, DAVID? CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE YOU'VE BEEN?
WHAT DO I TELL HER? HOW CAN I TELL HER?

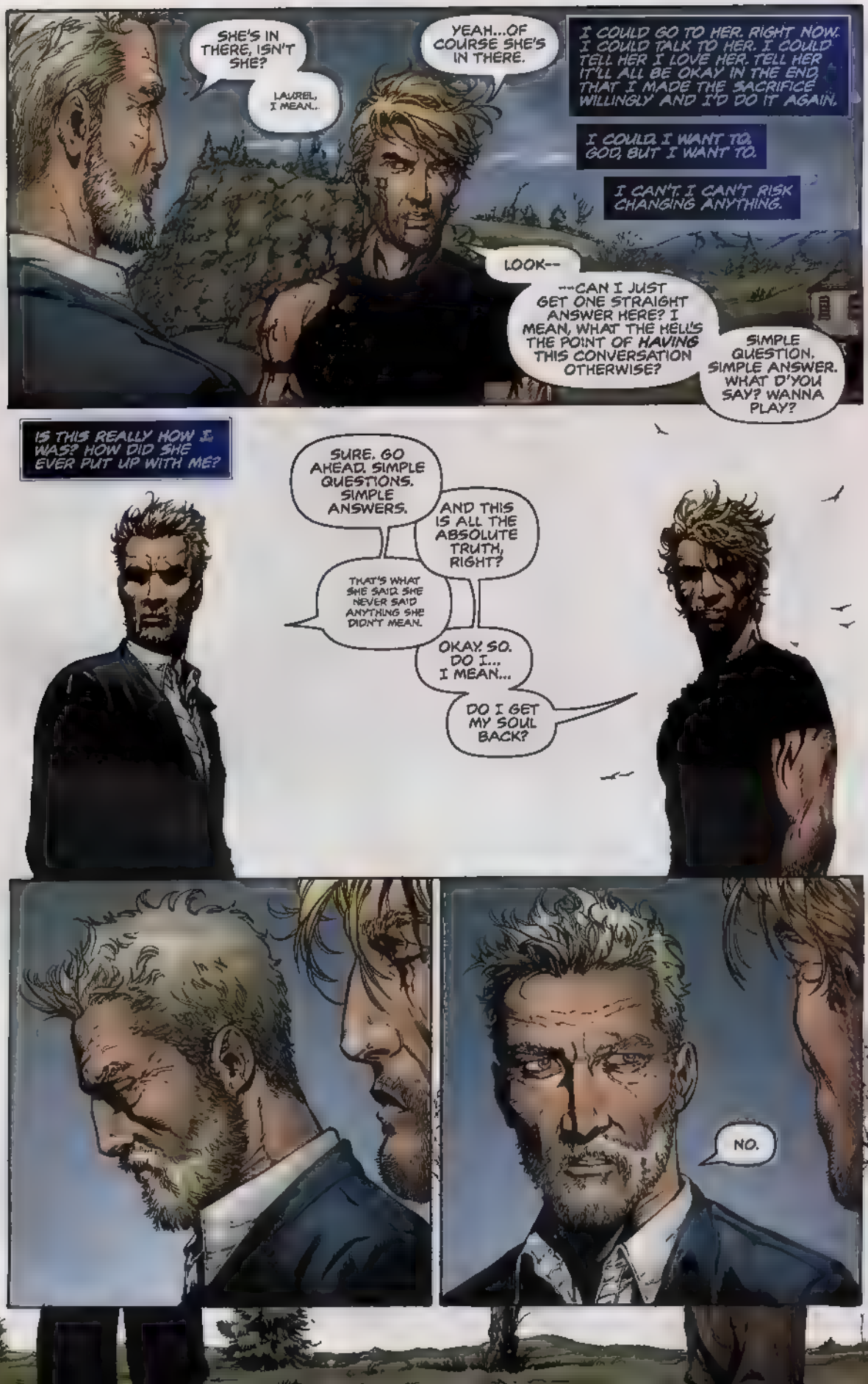

I DON'T REMEMBER. I REMEMBER WALKING.
WALKING FOR A LONG TIME.
BUT THAT'S ALL. I'M SORRY.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. YOU HAVE TIME TO FIGURE IT ALL OUT. ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD. THE CAPTAIN SAID YOUR JOB IS THERE, WAITING FOR YOU, WHENEVER YOU'RE READY TO COME BACK.
AND SO AM I.
ONE THING, WHEN YOU FIRST WOKE UP YOU...
DAVID... WHO'S LAUREL?
JUST... SOMEONE IN A DREAM. THAT'S ALL.
DID YOU MAKE IT, LAUREL? DID YOU GET CLEAR AT LAST?
DID YOU?
AND IF YOU DID... HOW WILL I EVER KNOW?
THANK YOU, SARAH, I...
THANK YOU.


--AND CAPTAIN LEWIS SAYS THEY'VE CLEANED OUT YOUR OLD DESK, TAKEN ALL THE PORNO OUT BEFORE I COULD SEE IT, WHICH I THOUGHT WAS VERY GENTLEMANLY OF HIM.
HE'S THAT KIND OF GUY.
I MANAGED TO GET US ON A DIRECT FLIGHT TO L.A. SO YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT CHANGING PLANES. I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU HATE THAT.
THANKS.
SO YOU READY TO GO HOME?
AND THEN SOME.
IT WAS A DIFFICULT BIRTH. WE ALMOST LOST HER TWICE.
YES... BUT SHE'S A FIGHTER, THIS ONE. NEVER KNOWS WHEN TO QUIT.
SO, YOU HAVE A NAME FOR HER YET?
IT'S FUNNY. WE'D TALKED ABOUT ANNA IF IT WAS A GIRL, OR MICHAEL IF IT WAS A BOY, BUT WHEN I LOOKED IN HER EYES FOR THE FIRST TIME, IT'S AS IF ONLY ONE NAME WOULD FIT.
LAUREL.

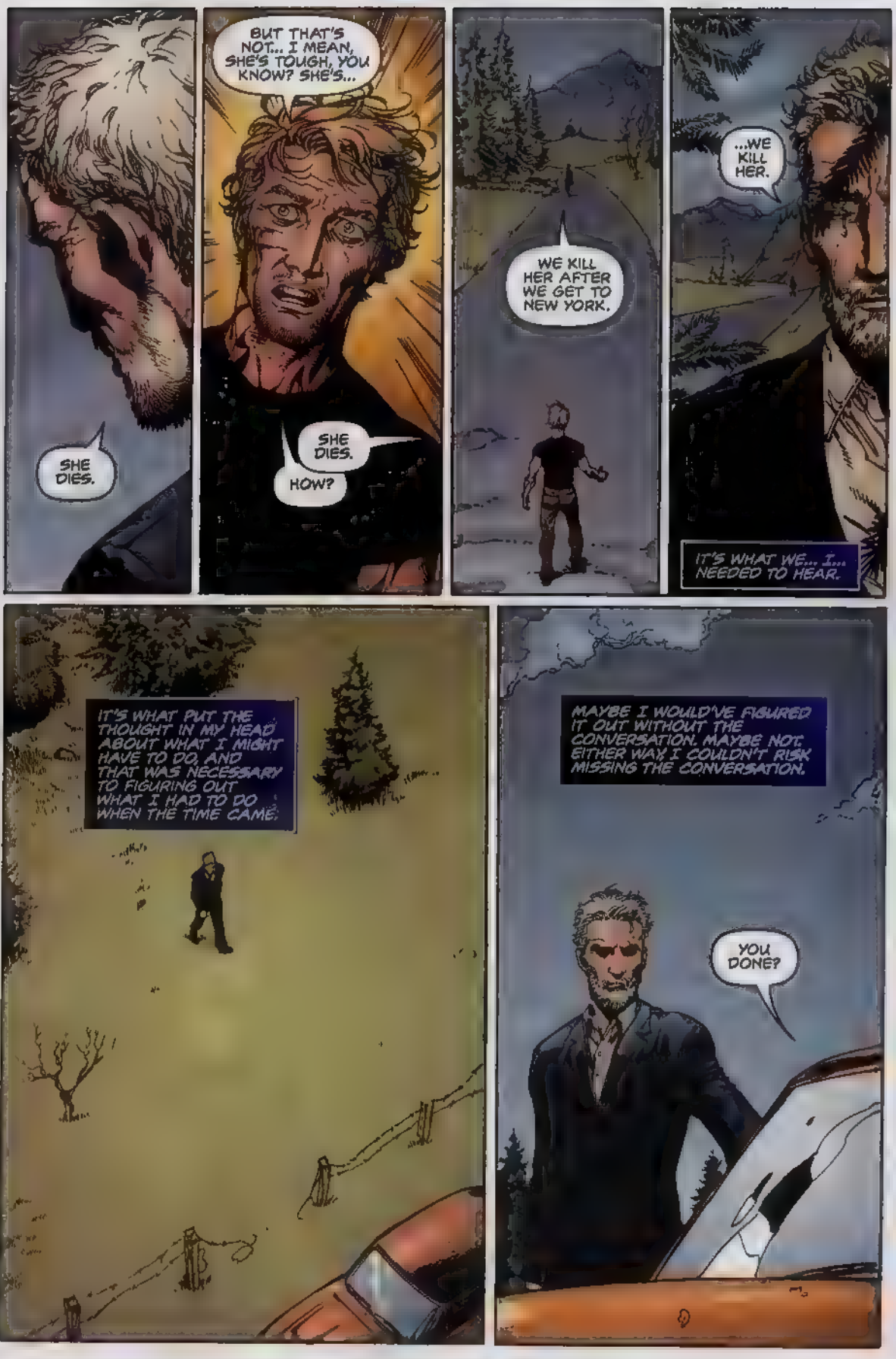
THERE YOU GO... JUST A FEW STEPS TO THE TAXI AND THEN WE'RE ON THE LONG ROAD HOME AGAIN.
NOT AS LONG AS THE LAST ONE, I HOPE.
NOWHERE NEAR.
WHAT YOU NEED NOW IS SOME PEACE AND QUIET.
I KNOW YOU CAN SEE ME, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN!
SOMEONE HAS TO SPEAK FOR US!
IT'S HIM!
HELP US, PLEASE!
YOU'RE THE ONE!
SOMEONE HAS TO FIGHT FOR US!
I...
I'LL TRY. I'LL TRY MY BEST.
GOOD. BECAUSE REST IS THE BEST THING IN THE WORLD FOR YOU RIGHT NOW.
BEST THING IN THE WHOLE WORLD.

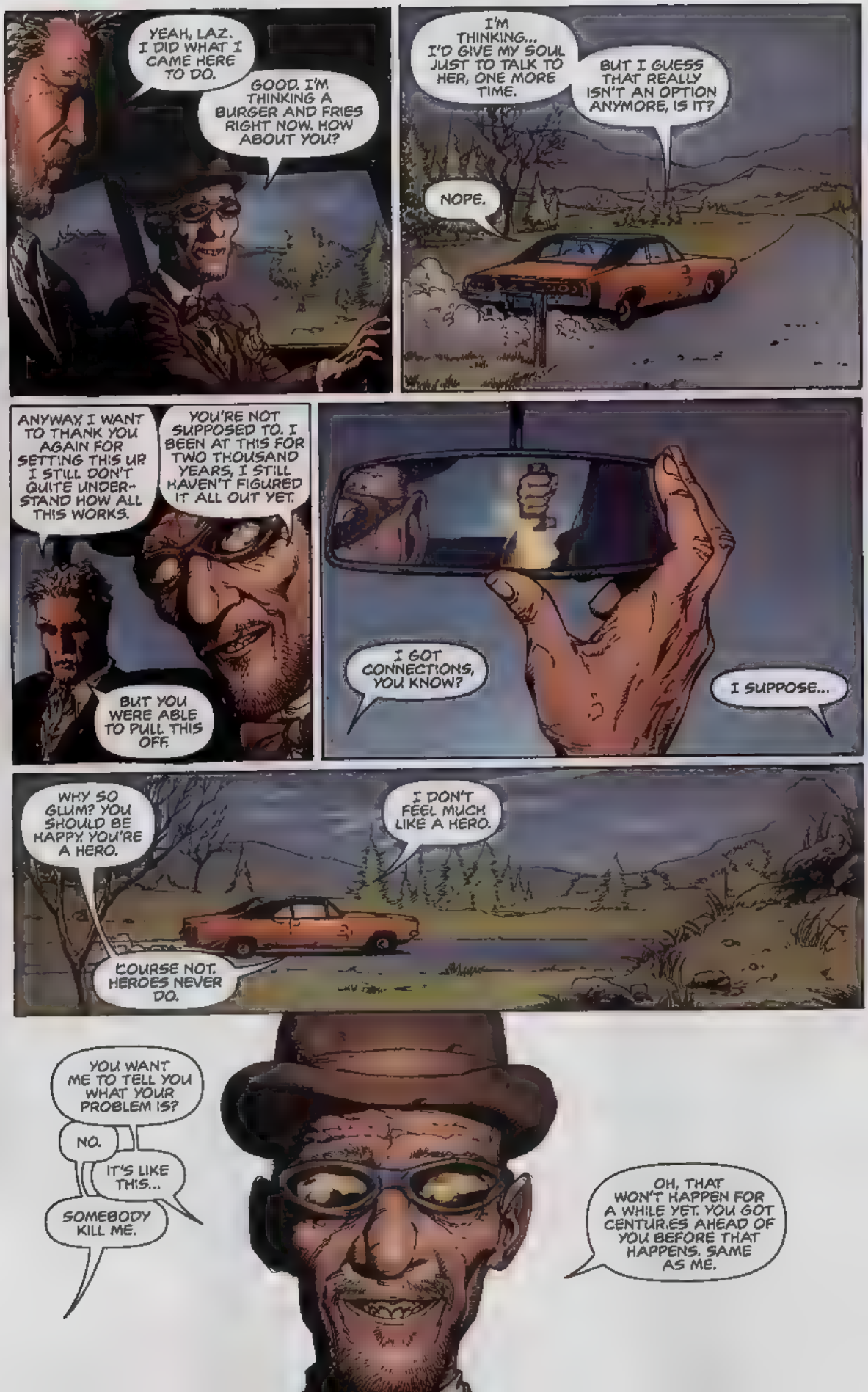
EPILOGUE
AFTER ALL THIS TIME, I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE HARDER TO FIND THIS PART OF THE ROAD.
BUT I GUESS SOME THINGS YOU JUST DON'T FORGET.
AND SOME APPOINTMENTS CAN'T BE MISSED.

HEY.
SO NOW I'M SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE YOU'RE ME, IS THAT IT?
THAT'S RIGHT. PLUS A FEW YEARS.
HUH. MUST'VE BEEN A HARD LIFE.
IT WAS.
BUT IF YOU'RE ME--
SHE TOLD YOU THAT EVERYTHING I SAY IS THE TRUTH.
HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT SHE--
I REMEMBER IT ALL.
NEVER MIND. STUPID QUESTION.
SO IF YOU'RE HERE, THAT MEANS I GET THROUGH ALL THIS.
AFTER A FASHION.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN? LOOK, IF YOU'RE ME, WHY DON'T YOU SAVE BOTH OF US A LOT OF TIME AND JUST TELL ME WHAT HAPPENS FROM HERE ON OUT?
I'M TELLING YOU EVERYTHING THAT WAS SAID TO ME. I'M SORRY IF IT SEEMS CRYPTIC, I ALWAYS ASSUMED THERE WAS A GOOD REASON FOR IT.
IS THERE?
BEATS ME.
BUT I ALSO DON'T KNOW WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF I CHANGE ANYTHING. COULD MAKE THINGS A LOT WORSE.
WORSE? LOOK AT ME. IS WORSE EVEN POSSIBLE?
OH, YES. MUCH, MUCH WORSE.


SHE'S IN THERE, ISN'T SHE?
LAUREL, I MEAN..
YEAH...OF COURSE SHE'S IN THERE.
I COULD GO TO HER. RIGHT NOW. I COULD TALK TO HER. I COULD TELL HER I LOVE HER. TELL HER IT'LL ALL BE OKAY IN THE END, THAT I MADE THE SACRIFICE WILLINGLY AND I'D DO IT AGAIN.
I COULD. I WANT TO. GOD, BUT I WANT TO.
I CAN'T. I CAN'T RISK CHANGING ANYTHING.
LOOK--
---CAN I JUST GET ONE STRAIGHT ANSWER HERE? I MEAN, WHAT THE HELL'S THE POINT OF HAVING THIS CONVERSATION OTHERWISE?
SIMPLE QUESTION. SIMPLE ANSWER. WHAT D'YOU SAY? WANNA PLAY?
IS THIS REALLY HOW I WAS? HOW DID SHE EVER PUT UP WITH ME?
SURE. GO AHEAD. SIMPLE QUESTIONS. SIMPLE ANSWERS.
AND THIS IS ALL THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH, RIGHT?
THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID. SHE NEVER SAID ANYTHING SHE DIDN'T MEAN.
OKAY. SO. DO I... I MEAN...
DO I GET MY SOUL BACK?
NO.

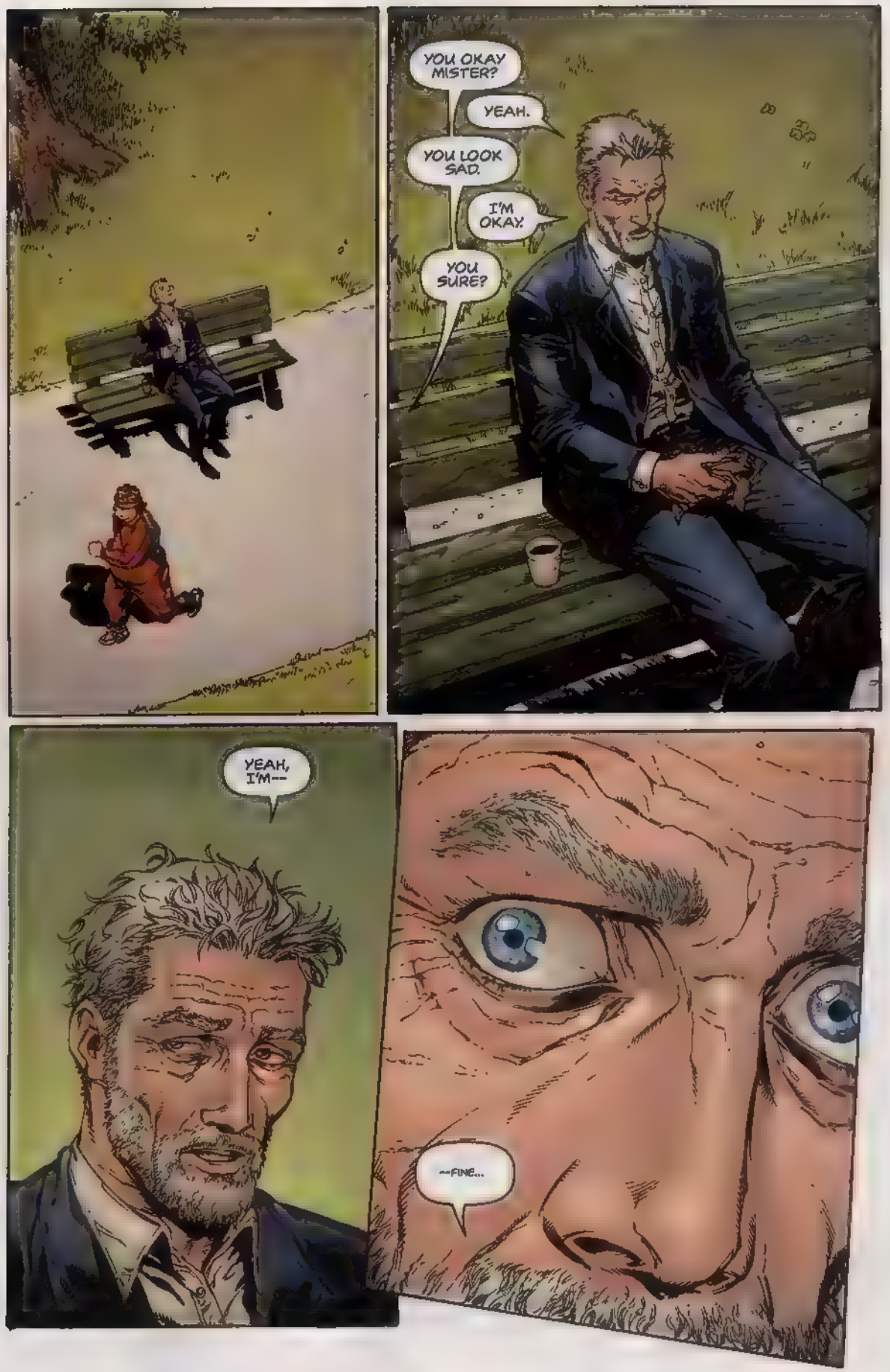
NO? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, NO? LAUREL SAID IF I DON'T GET MY SOUL BACK, I TURN INTO A WALKER, TRAPPED BETWEEN THE TWO WORLDS.
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE A WALKER.
FUNNY, ISN'T IT?
I SHOULD GO NOW. MY TIME HERE IS ALMOST UP.
WAIT A MINUTE...YOU CAN'T JUST LEAVE LIKE THIS--
I CAN. I AM. I DID.
SO LONG AGO...
ANYWAY, GOOD LUCK, I--
WAIT!
WHAT ABOUT...I MEAN, YOU'D KNOW, RIGHT? YOU'VE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH ALL THIS. YOU'D...
WHAT ABOUT LAUREL? WHAT HAPPENS TO LAUREL?

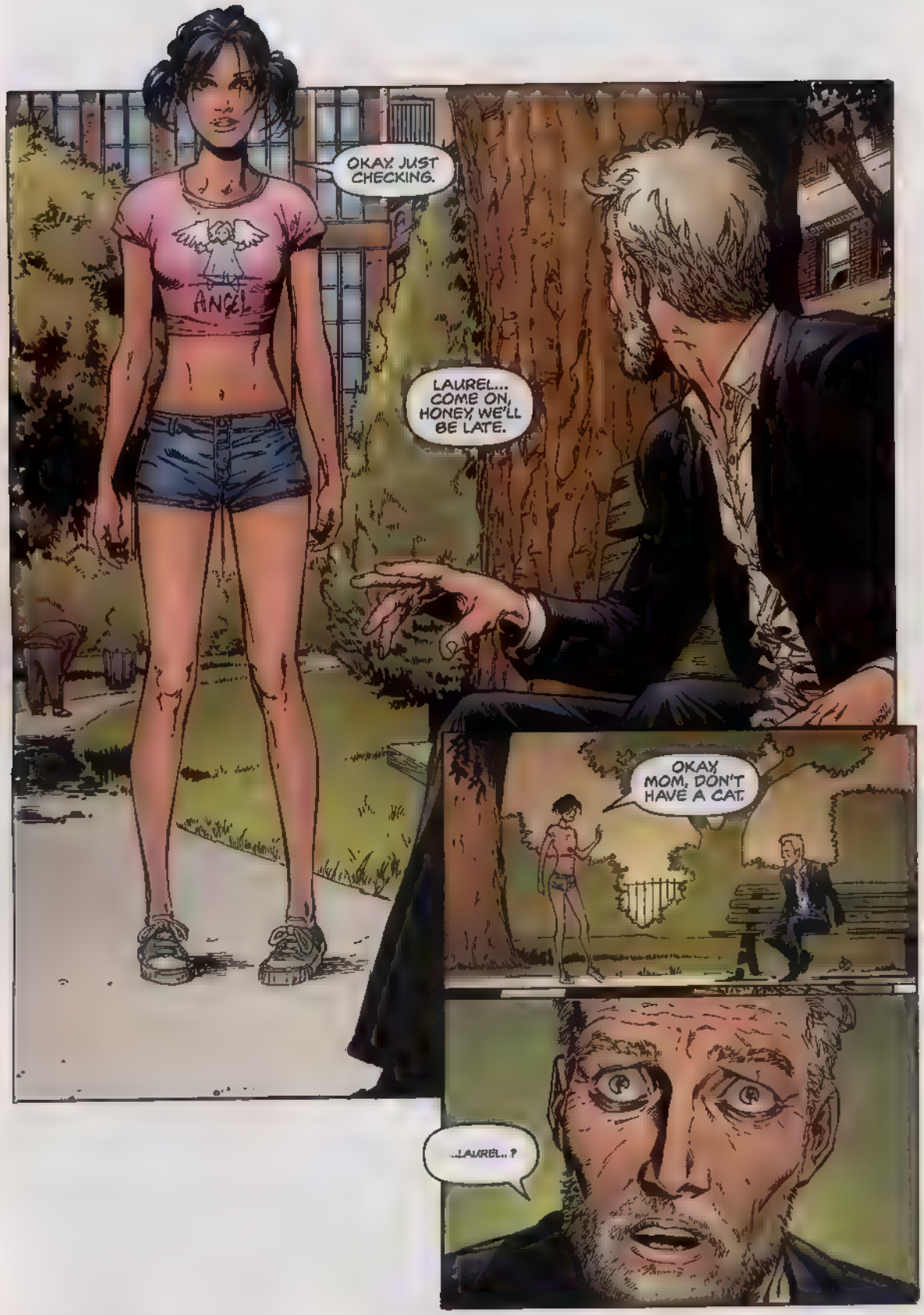

SHE DIES.
BUT THAT'S NOT... I MEAN, SHE'S TOUGH, YOU KNOW? SHE'S...
SHE DIES.
HOW?
WE KILL HER AFTER WE GET TO NEW YORK.
...WE KILL HER.
IT'S WHAT WE... I... NEEDED TO HEAR.
IT'S WHAT PUT THE THOUGHT IN MY HEAD ABOUT WHAT I MIGHT HAVE TO DO, AND THAT WAS NECESSARY TO FIGURING OUT WHAT I HAD TO DO WHEN THE TIME CAME.
MAYBE I WOULD'VE FIGURED IT OUT WITHOUT THE CONVERSATION. MAYBE NOT. EITHER WAY, I COULDN'T RISK MISSING THE CONVERSATION.
YOU DONE?


YEAH, LAZ. I DID WHAT I CAME HERE TO DO.
GOOD. I'M THINKING A BURGER AND FRIES RIGHT NOW. HOW ABOUT YOU?
I'M THINKING... I'D GIVE MY SOUL JUST TO TALK TO HER, ONE MORE TIME.
BUT I GUESS THAT REALLY ISN'T AN OPTION ANYMORE, IS IT?
NOPE.
ANYWAY, I WANT TO THANK YOU AGAIN FOR SETTING THIS UP. I STILL DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND HOW ALL THIS WORKS.
YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO. I BEEN AT THIS FOR TWO THOUSAND YEARS, I STILL HAVEN'T FIGURED IT ALL OUT YET.
BUT YOU WERE ABLE TO PULL THIS OFF.
I GOT CONNECTIONS, YOU KNOW?
I SUPPOSE...
WHY SO GLUM? YOU SHOULD BE HAPPY. YOU'RE A HERO.
I DON'T FEEL MUCH LIKE A HERO.
COURSE NOT. HEROES NEVER DO.
YOU WANT ME TO TELL YOU WHAT YOUR PROBLEM IS?
NO.
IT'S LIKE THIS...
SOMEBODY KILL ME.
OH, THAT WON'T HAPPEN FOR A WHILE YET. YOU GOT CENTURIES AHEAD OF YOU BEFORE THAT HAPPENS. SAME AS ME.

OVER THE YEARS, YOU'VE HELPED AN AWFUL LOT OF PEOPLE ON EITHER SIDE OF THE METAPHOR. SOME DAYS I THINK PRETTY SOON THIS SIDE IS GOING TO BE AS DESERTED AS IT WAS WHEN I FIRST SHOWED UP. YOU'VE GIVEN HOPE TO A LOT OF PEOPLE. MOST OF 'EM HAVE THANKED YOU FOR IT.
BUT YOU NEVER GOT TO HEAR THANK YOU FROM THE ONE PERSON WHO MATTERED THE MOST.
LEAVE IT ALONE, JUST--
SEE, THAT'S THE THING ABOUT LOVE.
WHEN YOU LOVE SOMEONE, I MEAN REALLY LOVE SOMEONE, IT'S UNCONDITIONAL. YOU CAN'T EVER EXPECT ANYTHING BACK. YOU GIVE BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO. AND YOU DON'T EXPECT TO HEAR SOMEBODY SAY THANKS.
BUT A PART OF YOU NEEDS TO HEAR THE OTHER PERSON SAY THANKS. AND WHEN THAT PART COMES OUT, YOU FEEL LIKE A FRAUD, LIKE YOU'RE BEING SELFISH.
THAT'S WHY YOU DON'T THINK YOU'RE A HERO. BECAUSE HEROES AREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE SELFISH.
THE MORE YOU LOVE, THE MORE YOU GIVE; THE MORE YOU GIVE, THE MORE YOU NEED; AND THE MORE YOU NEED, THE MORE YOU HATE YOURSELF FOR NEEDING.
ARE WE TAKING THE LONG WAY AROUND?
ISN'T EVERYONE?

WELL, HERE YOU GO. IF YOU NEED ANY MORE ADVICE--
RIGHT.
AFTER ALL, NOT MANY OF US CAN WALK BOTH SIDES OF THE STREET THESE DAYS. I CAN BE A REAL HELP.
YEAH, YOU'RE A REAL--
--WAIT A MINUTE. THIS ISN'T THE CORNER WHERE YOU PICKED ME UP.
IT ISN'T?
NO.
IMAGINE THAT.
SCREW


YOU OKAY MISTER?
YEAH.
YOU LOOK SAD.
I'M OKAY.
YOU SURE?
YEAH, I'M--
--FINE...


OKAY. JUST CHECKING.
ANGEL
LAUREL... COME ON, HONEY. WE'LL BE LATE.
OKAY, MOM, DON'T HAVE A CAT.
...LAUREL...?

THANK YOU.

YOU'RE WELCOME... YOU'RE WELCOME...
DETECTIVE GREY? WE'VE GOT A HOMICIDE CALL, 414 BROADWAY. SOMETHING WEIRD ABOUT THIS ONE.
YEAH... OKAY, I'LL BE THERE.
I'LL ALWAYS BE THERE.

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To everyone involved in "Midnight Nation":

Thank you so much for converting this literary snob into a hard-core comic fan. I've been an avid reader all my life and devoured every book I could get my hands on. In recent years, however, I've become disillusioned by far too many over-hyped and under-delivered books. I was desperate for something to restore my faith in what had once been my favorite past-time. I found that faith in, of all places, a comic shop. I never, ever, though I'd be a comic lover. Too many caped super-heroes for me. But then I saw this comic called "Midnight Nation." Your cover for the first issue jumped out at me and, without bothering to look inside, I bought it. Since then, I've been hooked, devouring each issue and being left increasingly blown away as the story progresses. Gary Frank's art isn't that shabby, either. This is not only the greatest comic series I've read (and I've started reading a few-all Top Cow's) but one of the greatest stories I've ever encountered. I can't wait to see how this one ends, and have no doubt I'll be absolutely blown away. Great job all around!

ANGELA MARKHAM
VIA E-MAIL

"Isn't that shabby"? Wow, tough critic! But thank you!! (Hint: try Rising Stars too!)

Dear Night People,

As Midnight Nation winds to its conclusion and Rising Stars continues its final act, I'm wondering what, if anything, is next for Joe's Comics. I seem to remember that when the line started, the hope was to have one or two new titles per year. Are you able to shed any light on this? Thanks!

PAUL FUTH
MINNEAPOLIS

For those of you who haven't heard, Joe is finishing Rising Stars and doing a one shot called Dream Police with us and then will be going to Marvel. Honestly, with your schedule Joe, I think you should look into a vacation first! But we wish you the BEST of luck and we'll all miss working with you and your wonderful stories! It's been an honor, Sir!

Dear Renae,

As much as I'm looking forward to the resolution of MIDNIGHT NATION, I'll be sorry to see it go. The book is among Joe Straczynski's best work to date and Gary Frank's art is amazing. I also wanted to thank Top Cow taking a chance on the Straczynski comics. Top Cow is a company I've mainly associated with T&A comics and still do to some degree. But you surprised me by publishing two of the smartest books in the industry. I'm sorry to hear that Joe's Comics will be closing up shop as Joe Straczynski moves over to Marvel. In COME IN ALONE, Warren Ellis talked about the value of creating strong original works to build the comics industry versus writing the latest adventures of the industry's perennial characters. As much as I enjoy Straczynski's Spiderman work, I wish he chose to continue to divide his time between Marvel and Joe's Comics. Right now I'm kind of sold on Ellis' theory and feel that the move to an exclusive agreement with Marvel is a creative step back, even though I'm sure it's fun to play with their characters. I'm hoping that Joe's Comics reopens again some time in the future. I also hope Top Cow continues to experiment with other creators the way you have with Joe Straczynski. Finally, I want to thank you for doing such a great job on both MIDNIGHT NATION and RISING STARS. And I'm not saying that just because I believe you're the prettiest editor in comics. (Heck, you don't see Marvel or DC printing pictures of their editors on their letter pages. I don't even want to imagine what that would do to sales!) Good luck with your future ventures.

BILL KELLY
VIA E-MAIL

Hey, I would certainly welcome Joe back with open arms! It's nice to have your name on projects that really make you proud on every level. Very rarely are teams of this caliber put together and even more rare is the team that STAYS together. Joe, Gary, Sibal, Gorder, Milla and Dreamer Design are the very best the industry has to offer....uhoh...I'm getting misty eyed!

Renae,

I first have to say that Midnight Nation and Rising Stars were the first comics that I ever purchased, so I am not in any position to make comparisons to other comics/comic companies. I simply know that JMS has created two wonderful stories, and I hate to see them end. I don't think anyone has the ability to manipulate characters (and our perceptions of them) like JMS, and I am glad he has found a medium that gives him the creative freedom to explore an issue such as religion (Christianity, even) like only he can. Finally, I have to say that I honestly look forward to reading the letters section just for your responses. I have learned that it is impossible to anticipate what The Great Maker will think of next, and yet we wacky readers still try. Thanks for making a great comic even greater with your candor and wit.

CHAD HUNEYCUTT
ATLANTA, GA

My mom will like that last sentence. :)

MN#11 was beautiful to me. What made it so you might ask? David turns his head to these things that claim to have had love for Laurel in their hearts-and maybe they did feel a little for her, although they certainly never showed it-and he says to them, and none of you, ever...not one of you? His admonishment of the shadows was righteous and just. Then his last words to Laurel stirred up something very deep in my heart-self sacrifice. I had to fight back the tears. ...but I guess I put you through all this for nothing...nothing?..I LOVE YOU ... he gives her his soul. He really loves her and what's more he's willing to show it. I love this book and when it ends I will be sad to see it go. Although the way that #11 ends leaves the doors open for more doesn't it? OK I'll wait for #12 thank-you for publishing this book.

J.MARINO FATICA
VIA E-MAIL

You're welcome!

Dear Renae:

Well, the journey's almost over, for the characters, readers and creators alike. For me, reading MIDNIGHT NATION is akin to watching a compelling tv series; now, the season (or series) finale is right around the corner. And I find myself wishing that the network would renew it. Sure, there were long gaps between issues, but I didn't mind. As long as issue 12 didn't arrive, the story was still being told. And I LIKED the story being told, so I was in no hurry to see its conclusion. The entire creative team should be commended for putting out one of the most thoughtful and visually dynamic series to ever hit the stands. It,s rare to find a comic that mixes action, spirituality, romance and theology into such a strong cocktail. Issue 11 was beautifully done. The notion that where there,s love, there,s hope was handled well. David truly did love Laurel, as witnessed by his selfless sacrifice. And isn't that what true love is all about? Could it be said that the Devil, and other Walkers loved Laurel too? Perhaps to some extent, but these selfish, hopeless creatures didn't love her as David did. He gave, with no wish to receive in return. And I found the Devil's denouncement of hope rather ironic. To rebel against the Maker,, isn't the hoping to create a new world- one without suffering and turmoil? The emphasis, of course, being on hoping. For me, personally, no matter how ugly the world gets, I need only listen to the laugh of a loved one, or see the sun rise to realize that it is worth the struggle. Every day IS another chance to get it right. As with many a tv series that returns to the airwaves via a reunion telefilm, perhaps MIDNIGHT NATION will return one day as an original graphic novel,

furthering the story of these engaging characters. Hey, a guy can hope, right? Can't (or is that can,?) wait for issue 12,

ILKE HINCER
VIA E-MAIL

Yes, it is really hard to put the characters away isn't it? Like waving good bye to friends. But yes, there is room for more stories...there is ALWAYS room for more stories. I guess we'll just have to hope together, huh?

Dear Renae,

I've never been very good at saying goodbye. Somehow, I don't think it will be any different this time. Let's find out if anyone is willing to listen to me explaining why I'm going to miss Midnight Nation. JMS being the writer of Midnight Nation, explains a lot. The characterization in this book has been superb. Somewhere along the road, I really began to care about what would happen to Laurel and David. It's not that surprising that David sacrificed his soul for the love of his life. We did the same walk he did. Wouldn't you all have done the same? Another great thing about Joe is that he takes on many topics, even when they are controversial. Joe wasn't afraid to write a comic with a religious background, or to tell the story of a cop who put a service revolver to his head. JMS has a story to tell, and he wants that story to be interesting. I can't say goodbye without mentioning Gary Frank. His artwork is both beautiful and realistic and it fits this book. Gary knows how to catch an impression and put in on paper. So that's why I'm glad I took my chances with the road. With Laurel and David. And that's why I'm not going to say goodbye. Instead, I'll look back upon our journey and tell everyone who's willing to listen: "It's been a great walk!" And I just did. Thanks to all who contributed to Midnight Nation.

JOHAN NELEMANS,
ZEVENBERGEN, THE NETHERLANDS

Be assured that I will miss all of the readers of this book as much as they miss us. You have all been such a positive, inquisitive, and intelligent bunch. I've loved reading every letter that you sent. Thank you for taking the trip with us!

Dear Renae,

First let me say that one of the many reasons I'll be sad to see Midnight Nation come to an end is that I'll miss you doing the letter column. Your communication with the readers is one of the things that has made this series a cut above the rest. Now onto my main reason for writing in. There's an observation about #9 that I'm surprised no one else has commented on yet. The 'other man' a.k.a. Satan used some very interesting misdirection in his diatribe about God. He wasn't lying exactly, but neither was he necessarily discussing the truth either. It all goes back to his opening line in the lecture. "Let's pretend, just for the moment, that you're God". Everything he says from then on is actually a hypothetical scenario being presented in such a way that it could be misinterpreted as fact. The whole story about God creating the world out of boredom and introducing misery because he wanted entertainment is actually a part of the hypothetical scenario that the 'other man' is discussing. He's not actually lying when he says all of it, he's just presenting a "let's suppose" of how things might've happened and not taking time to emphasize that it's a theoretical discussion. I like the way that Stracynski presents his version of the Devil. Here's a creature that's too proud to lie (or perhaps isn't even able to), but will take every opportunity to distort the truth that isn't actual lying so as to further his goals. The misdirection was done so superbly that I (and likely a great deal of the rest of the audience) didn't even notice. Very well done I must say. I just finished #11 tonight and was amazed by the twist. David is one of the few (if not the very first) to take the option of being souless, over killing his guide. After reading the story I came to much the same thought on the conclusion as Ian Suggs laid out in his letter printed in that very same issue. It seems that perhaps David will take over the role that Laurel held and become a guide for those that fall between the cracks until one of them gives up his or her soul for David. Then again Stracysnki has been very good at surprising me so far, so I could be totally wrong of course. And I'm very sure that that wouldn't be a bad thing. Sincerely thanking all the people that had a hand in giving this story to myself and others

GREG BASORE
VIA E-MAIL

(Psst...I do most of the other letter columns here at the Cow and would love to have you swing by ANYTIME in one of those too!) In the end, we'll never know what the Other Guy (as we call him) knew to be truth but you're right he was a sneaky one! What matters though, is David's intent. He didn't allow his own fear, in this case, of being soulless, to stop him from helping someone else. If everyone could do that, this world would DEFINITELY be a better place!

Renae,

I love you guys you're great - but you probably know that. I love me too, and you know that now - life's so smashing!!! I've really enjoyed our twelve little meetings, lets do it again some time.....

ENGLISH MIKE,
ENGLAND?

I'll have my people call your people...!

Renae,

There's only one thing to say about issue #11:"Well, I certainly didn't see THAT coming." PS: Thanks...I needed that!

ROB CARR
VIA E-MAIL

Any time!

I'm going to keep this simple, Thank You.

RICK SNYDER
POTSDAM, NY

You're welcome!

Hi Renae,

First and foremost let me just state what an awesome job you're doing at Top Cow!! With so many great titles to work on, you are to be commended. Of course you know this already because thousands of readers have told you so, as well as how beautiful you are!!! I am sorry to hear about your computer crash. You didn't hit the "delete all" by accident did you?(Ha,Ha, just kidding)Now on to the purpose of this letter. There have been excellent story lines throughout the history of comicdom and everyone has their favorite. Just to name a few, "The Watchmen", "Sin City", "The Death of Superman" and my favorite "The Phoenix Saga". Until now. This book has everything anyone could ask for. The plot exposition is excellent as well as the art. There's the emotions that are involved, the peaks and valleys of David's journey. The lessons that are learned along the way. The frustrations from two different viewpoints, David's and Laura's. This particular issue really moved me for the simple fact that a man can take a bullet for his loved one, or step in front of a speeding car but in both cases he might survive. Yet when it comes to giving up your soul for someone, there is no life as it was explained to David. There can be no greater sacrifice. Yet David didn't care, for unlike with his wife, he discovered true love, and one of the strongest characteristics of love is unselfishness. I kind of expected David would do it, but the details of the artwork showing David giving his soul to Laura was truly awesome!! I felt that. I was near tears, for Laura had only desired, as we all know now, to be able to enjoy life. I was wondering what that image meant in issue 10 now I know. If the story ended with this issue I would have been satisfied, but there is one more left in which I am sure will supplant issue 11. To all the crew at Midnight Nation congratulations on the story of the year!!

MUREL POLEE,JR
VIA E-MAIL

First and foremost...THANK YOU! And NO I didn't hit delete all...grumblegrumble...

I hope you all enjoyed this project as I know I did. This book has been one of my favorites to work on in the time I've been at Top Cow- top notch people and a top notch story. I will miss you all! Come and visit us on line at the Top Cow Message Boards. www.topcow.com. We'll keep discussing Midnight Nation for a very long time I'm sure!

Much Love!

Renae

Renae Geerlings